

WEIRD!

FANTASTIC!

ASTOUNDING!

BAFFLING

JULY 10c



MYSTERIES

YOU HAVE CREATED TOO
PERFECT AN IMAGE OF US,
FOOLISH SCULPTOR! MORTAL EYES
ARE FORBIDDEN TO SEE THE FORM
OF THE DEMONS OF HADES! YOU
TWO WITNESSES MUST DIE!



**"The bonds William and I bought
for our country's defense
helped build a house for us!"**

**HOW U. S. SAVINGS BONDS PAID OFF
FOR MRS. ROSE NYSSSE OF BRISTOL, PA.**

*"There's nothing more wonderful than a house
and garden of your own," says Mrs. Nysse,
"and no surer way to own one than to save for it
through U. S. Savings Bonds and the
safe, sure Payroll Savings Plan!"*



Mrs. Rose Nysse says,
"In 1942 William and I
started making U. S.
Savings Bonds a part
of our plan for financial
security. I joined the
Payroll Savings Plan
at the Sweetheart Soap
Co. where I work, and
began buying a \$100
bond a month, knowing
my money was safe and
working for me. U. S.
Savings Bonds certainly
make saving easier!"



**"Savings Bonds alone
made a \$5,000 down
payment on our house!"**
says Mrs. Nysse. "Al-
together, we've saved
\$8,000 just in bonds
bought through Payroll
Savings, and we are
keeping right on. When
we retire, our bonds will
make the difference be-
tween comfort and just
getting by. Bonds offer
a patriotic and practi-
cal way to security."

**You can do what the Nyssees are doing
—the time to start is now!**

Maybe you can't save quite as much as
William and Rose Nysse; maybe you can
save more. But the important thing is to
start now! It only takes three simple steps.

1. Make the big decision—to put saving **first**—
before you even draw your pay.
2. Decide to save a regular amount **system-
atically**, week after week, or month after month.
Even small sums, saved on a systematic basis,
become a large sum in an amazingly short time!
3. Start saving by signing up **today** in the
Payroll Savings Plan where you work.

You'll be providing security not only for
yourself and your family, but for the
blessed free way of life that's so very im-
portant to every American.

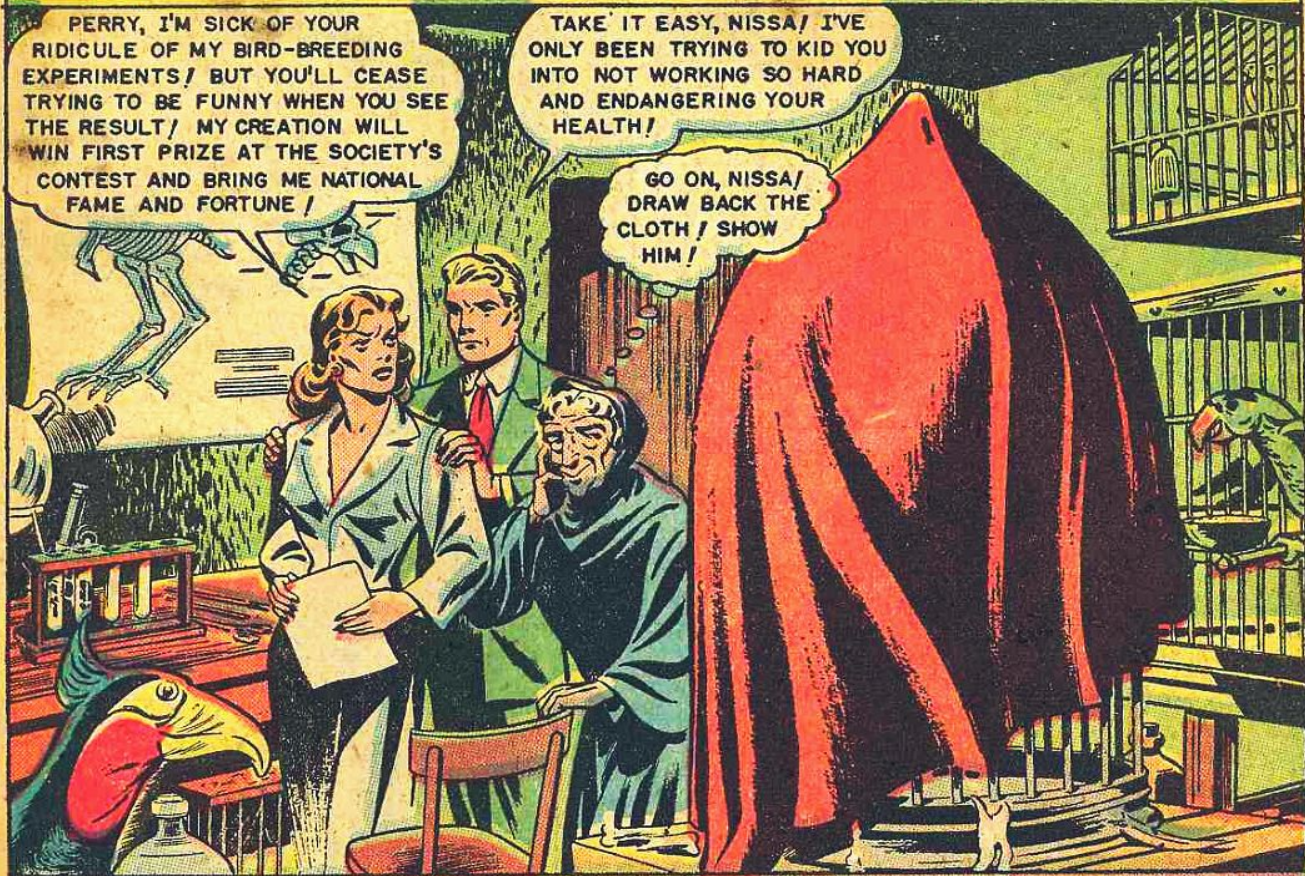
**FOR YOUR SECURITY, AND YOUR
COUNTRY'S TOO, SAVE NOW—
THROUGH REGULAR PURCHASE OF
U. S. SAVINGS BONDS!**



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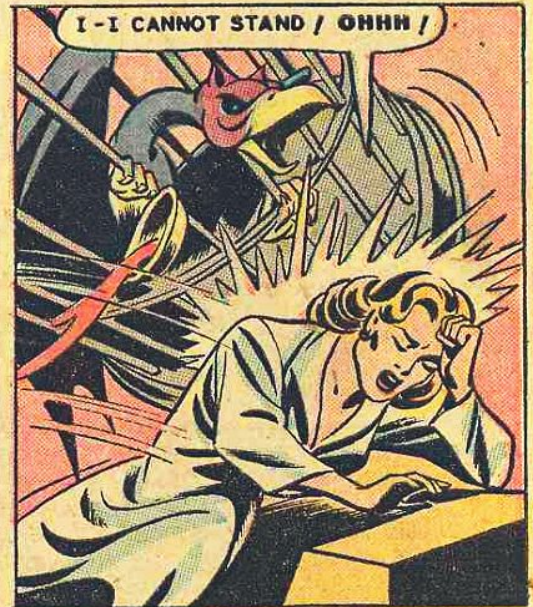
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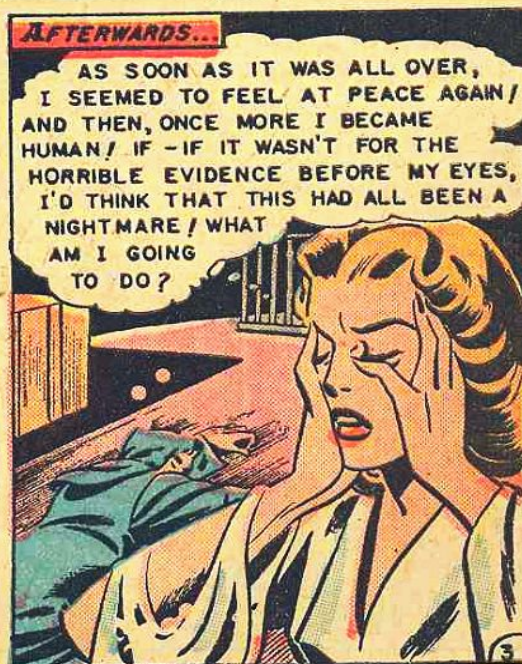
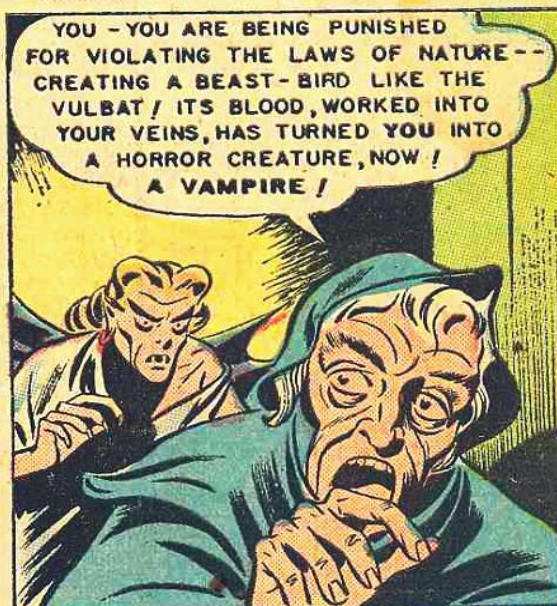
When Black Wings Flap ...



FOR MONTHS, EXOTICALLY LOVELY NISSA MARLO, OWNER OF THE SONGLAND BIRD SHOP, WAS SO ABSORBED IN A CROSS-BREEDING PROJECT, WHICH SHE INTENDED TO ENTER INTO A CONTEST OF THE LOCAL BIRD-LOVERS' SOCIETY, THAT SHE WORKED HERSELF ALMOST TO THE POINT OF A NERVOUS BREAKDOWN. THEN ONE NIGHT, GOADED INTO ANGER BY THE FRIENDLY JOSHING OF HER FIANCE, PERRY JACKSON, NISSA REVEALED TO HIM THE SECRET RESULT OF HER EXPERIMENTS, NOT KNOWING THAT THUS SHE WAS UNLEASHING A CHAIN OF MACABRE INCIDENTS THAT WOULD ENGULF THEM ALL IN A FINAL, HORRIBLE DOOM!







LEAVING THE SHOP, NISSA HURRIED TO THE APARTMENT OF HER PERSONAL PHYSICIAN. . .

I'LL TELL DR. JACOBY EVERYTHING! I CAN TRUST HIM NOT TO BETRAY ME! PERHAPS HE CAN HELP!



DR. JACOBY, SOMETHING TERRIBLE HAS HAPPENED!

WHAT IS IT, MY DEAR?

GOOD GRIEF! NISSA LOOKS TERRIBLE! I MUST'VE GONE TOO FAR WITH MY SPECIAL TREATMENT OF HER!



SWIFTLY, NISSA Poured OUT HER STORY OF THE NIGHT'S HORRIBLE EVENTS. . .

NISSA, IT'S IMPOSSIBLE! VAMPIRES ARE ONLY LEGENDARY CREATURES! YOU MUST BE SUFFERING FROM HALLUCINATIONS! YOUR PUPILS ARE DILATED -- YOUR PULSE FANTASTICALLY EXCITED!



YOUR NERVOUS EXHAUSTION IS MY FAULT! I'VE BEEN ENCOURAGING YOU TO OVERWORK, PUT YOU ON A WEAKENING DIET, SO YOU WOULD BECOME MORE AND MORE DEPENDENT UPON ME! IT WAS THE ONLY WAY I COULD GET YOU AWAY FROM PERRY JACKSON, DARLING NISSA!



ANGER WELLED UP IN NISSA! SHE FELT HER BLOOD PRESSURE RISE, AND ONCE AGAIN THE TRANSFORMATION INTO A BLOOD-MAD HORROR CREATURE BEGAN. . .

IT - IT'S TRUE! YOU'RE CHANGING -- INTO A VAMPIRE!



YES, DR. JACOBY! ANGER AT THE FOUL TRICK YOU USED TO WIN MY LOVE HAS BROUGHT ON THE CHANGE!



AS SOON AS MY ANGER PASSED, AND MY FOUL DEED COMMITTED, I RETURNED TO HUMAN FORM AGAIN! I'D BETTER HURRY BACK TO THE SHOP AND REMOVE THE EVIDENCE OF MY CRIME THERE!





IN A FEW MINUTES...

I'VE RUNG AND RUNG THAT BELL AND NO ANSWER! NISSA MAY BE IN TROUBLE! I'VE GOT TO GET IN!

I—I'M TRAPPED! HE'S BREAKING IN! HE'LL DISCOVER THAT I'M A VAMPIRE!



I CAN FLY IN THIS FORM! AT LEAST I CAN GET AWAY FROM PERRY!



BEFORE, WHEN I ATTACKED SOMEONE AND SATISFIED MY WEIRD CRAVING, I AGAIN RETURNED TO NORMAL! I'LL HAVE TO TRY IT ONCE MORE!



HELP!
EIEEEEE!



IT DID WORK! I'M HUMAN ONCE AGAIN! AND JUST IN TIME! SOMEONE'S COMING!

NISSA!



NISSA, WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE IN THE PARK? WHEN I SEARCHED THE HOUSE AND DIDN'T FIND YOU, I HEADED FOR THE POLICE STATION! THEN I HEARD SCREAMS HERE IN THE PARK!



IT—IT'S NOTHING, PERRY! I WAS RESTLESS, AND DECIDED TO TAKE A WALK!

YOU ACT SO STRANGELY, NISSA! AND WHAT ARE THOSE FRESH BLOODSTAINS ON YOUR DRESS? YOUNG LADY, I'M GOING TO TAKE YOU TO DR. JACOBY, RIGHT AWAY!

NO! YOU CAN'T! I MEAN—I CAN'T GO THERE!



PERRY'S INSISTENCE BROUGHT ON AN ARGUMENT, AND AS ANGER GRIPPED NISSA, SHE SWIFTLY BEGAN TO CHANGE, UNTIL...

NISSA / Y-YOU'VE CHANGED INTO A-- A VAMPIRE!

SO NOW YOU KNOW MY TERRIBLE SECRET!



AS PERRY FLED IN PANIC, ALL THAT SAVED HIM WAS THE SUDDEN APPEARANCE OF A PARK POLICEMAN!

TOO LATE! THAT OFFICER HAS ALSO SEEN ME!

WHAT...! A VAMPIRE!



NOW THE WHOLE CITY WILL BE ALARMED AND HUNTING FOR ME! AH! THAT TOWN HALL BELL TOWER SHOULD BE A SAFE SANCTUARY!



THEY WON'T SEARCH FOR ME HERE! BUT I WISH SOME OF THESE (UGH) OTHER BATS WOULD LEAVE THE PLACE! THEY DON'T LIKE MY BEING HERE! THEY SEEM ANGRY!



A FEW MINUTES LATER...

THE BATS ARE ATTACKING ME IN FULL FORCE! I-I CAN'T DRIVE THEM OFF! AND THIS GONGING BELL WILL AWAKEN THE WHOLE TOWN!



YOU'RE RIGHT! THAT GONGING BELL DID MEAN SHE WAS HIDING UP THERE! LOOK! THE HIDEOUS CREATURE IS FALLING!



THESE HORRIBLE CLINGING THINGS HAVE WEAKENED ME FROM LOSS OF BLOOD! I-I'M FALLING! EEEYIIIIIEE!

SHE - SHE'S DEAD! SHE'S PAID THE FULL PENALTY FOR HER MADNESS! POOR, POOR NISSA!



THE END

BAFFLING MYSTERIES

9

THIS STORY BEGAN BACK IN 1913, WHEN ONE OF AMERICA'S WEALTHIEST FINANCIERS, BELDEN BROCKTON, WAS A SMALL BOY IN OHIO. NEAR THE BOY'S SCHOOL, A CERTAIN BLIND MAN USED TO TAKE HIS POST AT A STREET CORNER AND PLAY MELODIES ON HIS FLUTE. YOUNG BROCKTON FELT SORRY FOR THIS OLD MAN, AND MADE IT A PRACTICE TO SHARE HIS SCHOOL LUNCH WITH HIM, FOR WHICH THE BLIND BEGGAR WAS EXCEEDINGLY GRATEFUL...

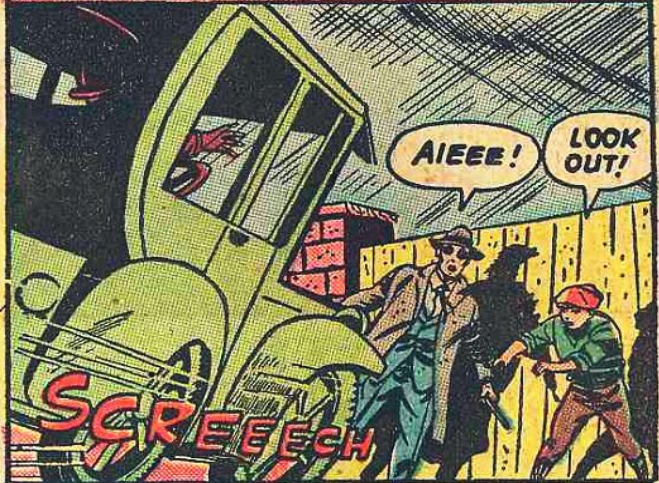
THE BLIND MAN WOULD PLAY THE SAME TUNE EACH DAY. BUT ONE DAY, HE HAD A SURPRISE FOR YOUNG BROCKTON...

I COMPOSED THIS TUNE LAST NIGHT, JUST FOR YOU, SON!

GEE, IT'S PRETTY!



THAT VERY DAY, WHEN THE BOY'S OWN SPECIAL TUNE WAS PLAYED, A CAR, OUT OF ITS DRIVER'S CONTROL, JUMPED THE CURB, AND...



THE POOR OLD MAN WAS KILLED INSTANTLY! YEARS PASSED, AND ONE DAY, BELDEN BROCKTON, NOW A SUCCESSFUL FINANCIER, WALKED TO HIS OLD SCHOOL NEIGHBORHOOD AND STOPPED ON A CERTAIN CORNER. MEMORIES STIRRED WITHIN HIM...

POOR OLD MAN... I REMEMBER THE ACCIDENT, AS IF IT HAPPENED YESTERDAY!

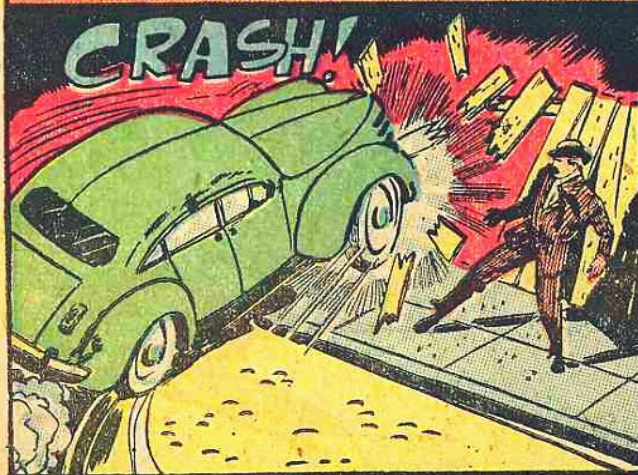


SUDDENLY, BROCKTON SEEMED TO HEAR NOTES PLAYED ON A FLUTE...

WHA...? IT'S A FLUTE, PLAYING THE TUNE THE BLIND MAN COMPOSED FOR ME, AND PLAYED THE DAY HE WAS KILLED! COULD IT BE A WARNING...?



THE FINANCIER LEAPED ASIDE, AS IF OBEYING THE MELODIC WARNING! A SEDAN, OUT OF ITS DRIVER'S CONTROL, JUST BARELY MISSED HIM!



THANK YOU, MY FRIEND... FOR WARNING ME OF DANGER AND SAVING MY LIFE... THANK YOU!

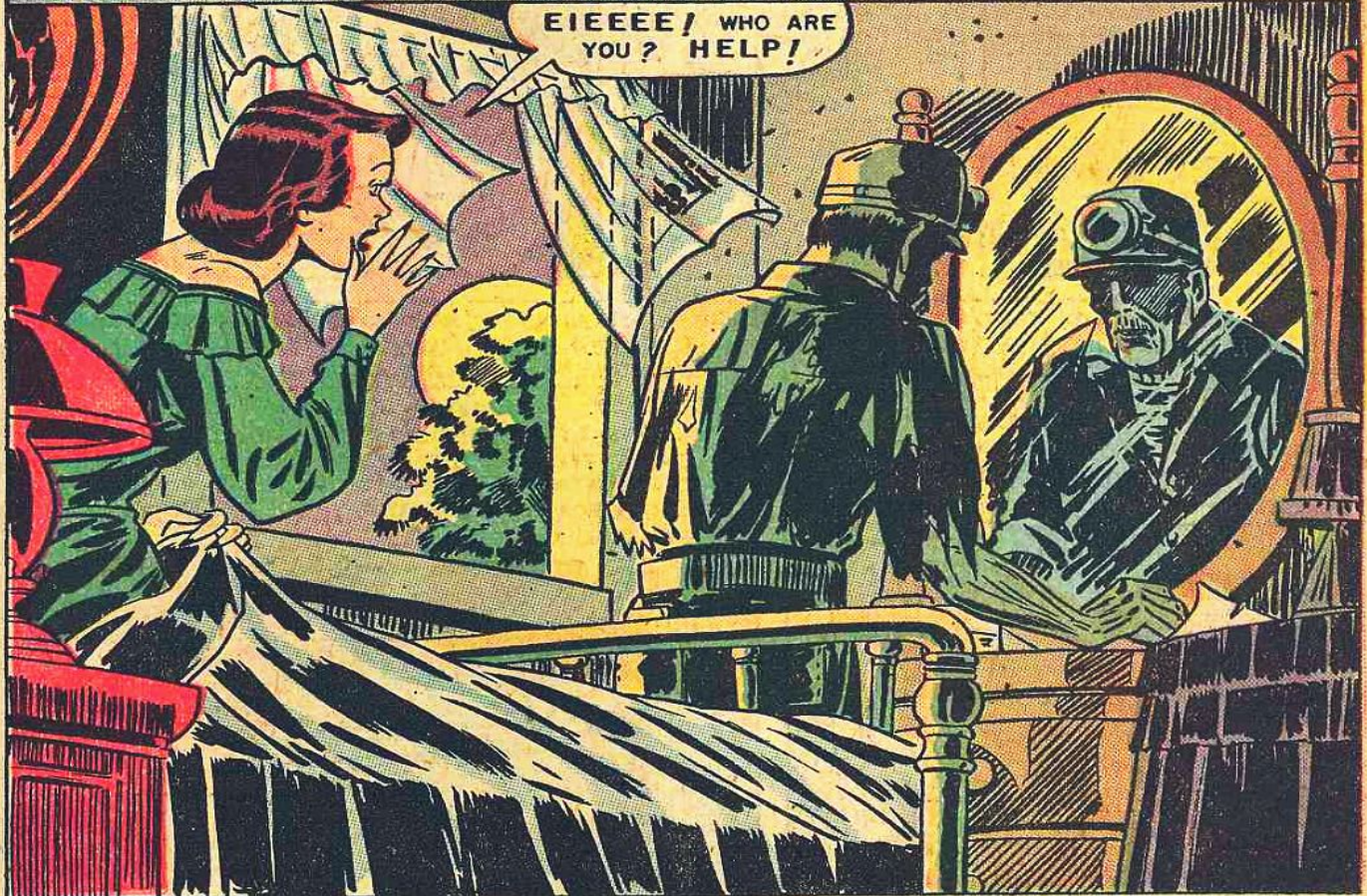


DID THAT MELODY PLAYED ON A FLUTE REALLY REACH BELDEN BROCKTON'S EARS FROM THE BEYOND TO WARN HIM OF IMPENDING DANGER? OR WAS THE SONG OF THE FLUTE MERELY IN THE MAN'S MIND, STIRRED BY SHARP MEMORIES OF THE PAST? WHAT DO YOU THINK, READERS?

THE END

DREAD CITY OF THE UNDEAD

IN THE STILL AND AWESOME DARKNESS JUST BEFORE DAWN, MARY KELLER, ALONE IN HER FURNISHED ROOM, WAS SUDDENLY AWAKENED BY A STRANGE SOUND. SHE SAT BOLT UPRIGHT IN BED, SWEAT BEADING HER FOREHEAD, HER SPINE CRAWLING WITH TERROR, AS HER HORRIFIED GAZE DISCOVERED AN INTRUDER IN THE ROOM. A SCREAM MOUNTED IN HER THROAT AND BROKE FROM HER LIPS.



NOTHING LEFT OF HIM BUT - BUT THOSE SHREDS OF CLOTHING, AND A LITTLE PILE OF DUST! THIS PAPER HE LEFT HERE -- WHY, IT'S A MAP!



ASTONISHED, MARY KELLER SAW THAT THE PAPER SHOWED A MAP OF THE PENNSYLVANIA COAL MINE WHERE HER FATHER, STEVE KELLER, AND A NUMBER OF OTHER MINERS WERE SUPPOSEDLY KILLED, 20 YEARS AGO, THOUGH THEIR CORPSES WERE NEVER FOUND...



THE NEXT DAY, AT THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ROCK CITY COAL MINING COMPANY...

THIS IS AN AUTHENTIC MAP OF THAT OLD MINE, WHERE THE DISASTER OCCURRED, MISS KELLER / THE X MARKS AN UNKNOWN SECTION / WHERE DID YOU SAY YOU GOT THIS MAP?

I-I DIDN'T SAY! THAT IS, IT'S TOO HORRIBLE TO TELL! AND YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE ME!



WE HAD TO ABANDON THAT MINE SHORTLY AFTER THE DISASTER. THE NEIGHBORING TOWN WAS SOON DESERTED, BECAUSE IT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE HAUNTED BY GHOSTS OF THE MINE VICTIMS / WE'VE HAD REPORTS OF MANY WEIRD, STRANGE HAPPENINGS / SUPPOSE YOU TELL ME YOUR STORY!



UNDER KIP MANNERS' KIND, SYMPATHETIC PROMPTING, MARY KELLER SOON BLURTED OUT THE TERRIFYING AND MACABRE INCIDENT OF THE NIGHT BEFORE. A LITTLE LATER...

WE SHOULD REACH ROCK CITY BY NIGHTFALL / I'VE OFTEN WANTED TO MAKE A FIRST-HAND INVESTIGATION OF THESE WILD REPORTS, FOR THE COMPANY. THIS SEEMS LIKE A GOOD TIME!

I'M GLAD YOU'RE LETTING ME ACCOMPANY YOU!



THAT EVENING...

ROCK CITY IS COMPLETELY DESERTED, LIKE A GHOST TOWN / M - MAYBE WE SHOULD HAVE WAITED FOR MORNING! IT'S GETTING DARK FAST!

NONSENSE! THERE IS NOTHING TO BE AFRAID OF!



IT'S DARK ALREADY, KIP! PLEASE, LET'S WAIT UNTIL MORNING!

THIS TOWN DOES GIVE YOU THE CREEPS! WAIT! THERE'S A LIGHT COMING FROM THAT BUILDING! LET'S INVESTIGATE!





THE STRANGE, DEAD-FACED MEN IGNORED KIP'S CALL AND SEEMED UNAWARE OF THE COUPLE'S PRESENCE. SUDDENLY, A DRAFT BLEW OUT THE LAMP AND PLUNGED THE ROOM INTO DARKNESS...



BUT THEN, OUTSIDE AGAIN...





A FEW MINUTES LATER...

HE GOT AWAY FROM US, BUT CHANCES ARE WE'LL FIND HIM AT THE MINE! WITH FIRE AS OUR WEAPON, WE DON'T HAVE TO FEAR HIM TOO MUCH!

WE MIGHT AS WELL SEE THIS THING THROUGH, NOW! WOULDN'T IT BE WONDERFUL IF WE DO FIND MY FATHER-- STILL ALIVE?

MINE NUMBER 4

THIS IS THE LOCATION MARKED X ON YOUR MAP! LET'S SEE WHAT'S UNDER THIS PILE OF OLD LUMBER!

A HOLE OR TUNNEL, LEADING DOWN INTO THE EARTH!

WE'RE DOWN IN A SECTION OF THE MINE, ALL RIGHT! WE-- HEY!

THEY'VE COME HERE, AS THE MONSTER SAID THEY WOULD! SEIZE THEM!

THERE, MARY KELLER, IS YOUR FATHER! BUT NOW THAT YOU'VE FOUND HIM, IT WILL DO YOU NO GOOD, BECAUSE YOU, TOO, ARE MY PRISONER!

FATHER! IS--IS IT REALLY YOU?

BIND THEM TO THE STAKES! SOON I WILL KILL THEM AND MAKE THEM MY ZOMBIE SLAVES, TOO!

MARY! YOU SHOULD NEVER HAVE COME HERE! NOW, YOU, TOO, WILL SUFFER FOR THE TERRIBLE MISTAKE I MADE TWENTY YEARS AGO!

THEN, MARY KELLER'S FATHER TOLD HIS STORY...

THIS IS THE THIRD DAY SINCE THE EXPLOSION AND WE'RE STILL TRAPPED! IF HELP DOESN'T REACH US SOON, THE OTHERS ARE GOING TO DIE! I'M THE ONLY ONE NOT BADLY INJURED!

THIS IS STRANGE! SOME GIANT CAVEMAN MUST HAVE BEEN KILLED AND CRUSHED HERE, THOUSANDS OF YEARS AGO IN THE GLACIAL AGE! HIS FIGURE IS IMPRINTED PERFECTLY IN THIS ANTHRACITE BED!

"TO PASS THE TIME, WAITING, HOPING FOR RESCUERS TO APPEAR, I BEGAN TO CHISEL OUT THE GIANT'S FIGURE, ENGRAVED IN THE COAL BED. SOON..."

STRANGE! THERE ARE STRONG TREMORS AND VIBRATIONS COMING FROM THIS FIGURE!



OUCH! CHOPPED MY FINGER WITH THAT BLASTED CHISEL! LOOK! THE DRIPPING BLOOD SEEMS TO BE SEEPING INTO THE FIGURE'S CHEST! AND THE TREMORS AND VIBRATIONS ARE BECOMING MORE NOTICEABLE!



SOMETHING TERRIBLE IS HAPPENING! THE ETCHED FIGURE OF THE GIANT IS BREAKING AWAY FROM THE COAL BED! IT—IT'S COME ALIVE!

YES! THANKS TO YOUR LOOSENING ME FROM THAT BED OF COAL, AND TO YOUR OWN LIFE'S BLOOD WHICH RENEWED MY SUPPLY!



"FEARING THAT IF I, HIS 'CREATOR', TRIED TO ESCAPE, OR ANYTHING HAPPENED TO ME, HIS OWN EXISTENCE MIGHT BE THREATENED, THE MINE MONSTER DID ME NO HARM, BUT MADE ME A HELPLESS PRISONER..."

A DAGGER OF COAL! YOU'RE KILLING MY COMRADES!

NOT "KILLING" THEM! MAKING THEM UNDEAD--ZOMBIES--WHO WILL BE MY SLAVES FROM NOW ON!



AS LONG AS YOU REMAIN LOYAL TO ME, YOU WILL STAY IN THIS SUSPENDED STATE OF ANIMATION! BUT IF ANY BETRAY ME, OR TRY TO ESCAPE, HE WILL SUFFER A HORRIBLE END, FAR WORSE THAN NORMAL DEATH!

WE WILL ALWAYS DO AS YOU WISH, MASTER!



AND SO FOR YEARS, THE ZOMBIES HAVE BEEN HAUNTING THE TOWN, AT THE MONSTER'S ORDERS, TO KEEP THE MINE FROM BEING REOPENED! BUT LATELY, SOME OF THE ZOMBIES HAVE BECOME RESTLESS AND DEFIED HIM, LIKE THE ONE WHO CONTACTED MARY!

HE'S COMING TOWARD US WITH A BLACK DAGGER!



THIS DAGGER-LIKE SLIVER OF COAL, SATURATED WITH UNDERGROUND PHOSPHORUS, WILL STRIKE YOU INTO AN UNDEAD STATE AND MAKE YOU A ZOMBIE, LIKE THE OTHERS!

NO! KIP! FATHER! HELP ME!



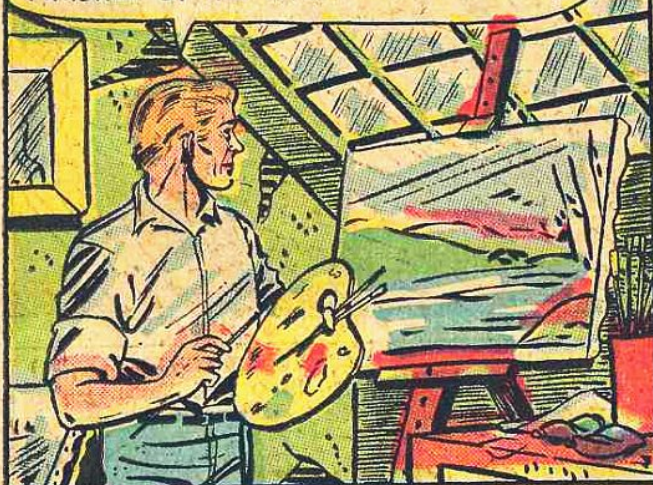


BAFFLING MYSTERIES

#10

IN 1924, A YOUNG AMERICAN ARTIST, PETER RENNER, WAS HARD AT WORK IN HIS PARIS GARRET STUDIO, PREPARING A PAINTING FOR THE GRAND PRIZE COMPETITION, TO BE HELD IN THE FALL. BUT TRY AS HE MIGHT, HE COULD NOT ACCOMPLISH A FINISHED CANVAS THAT SATISFIED HIM AS BEING GOOD ENOUGH TO ENTER IN THE COMPETITION...

BAH! IT'S NO USE! THIS PAINTING JUST ISN'T WORKING OUT! I'LL NEVER HAVE A WORK FINISHED BY THE TIME OF THE CONTEST!



THAT NIGHT, YOUNG RENNER WAS SUDDENLY AWAKENED BY SOUNDS OF AN INTRUDER IN HIS STUDIO...



WHA...? THERE'S SOMEONE WORKING ON MY BLANK CANVAS!

THE AMERICAN TURNED ASIDE FOR A MOMENT TO TURN ON THE LIGHT. THEN, WHEN HE FACED THE CORNER OF THE ROOM WHERE HE HAD SEEN THE STRANGE FIGURE...



HE'S GONE! MAYBE THERE WASN'T ANYONE HERE AFTER ALL! JUST MY IMAGINATION...

MY CANVAS... THERE'S A BEAUTIFUL LANDSCAPE PAINTED ON IT! BUT THE SHEET WAS BLANK WHEN I WENT TO BED! THEN THERE WAS SOMEONE HERE! BUT WHO?



RENNER TOOK THE LANDSCAPE TO A NEARBY ART DEALER...

BUT OF COURSE I RECOGNIZE THE STYLE! IT IS THAT OF ARMAND LORET, WHO ONCE LIVED IN THE SAME STUDIO WHERE YOU NOW LIVE, MONSIEUR RENNER! THE POOR BOY COULD NOT SELL HIS PAINTINGS, AND ONE NIGHT HE COMMITTED SUICIDE!



RENNER DID NOT ENTER A WORK OF HIS OWN IN THE FALL COMPETITIONS, BUT SUBMITTED ARMAND LORET'S LANDSCAPE AS "AGENT" FOR THE DEAD MAN. IT WON FIRST PRIZE IN THE CATEGORY OF POSTHUMOUS AWARDS!

POOR LORET! HE HAD TO KILL HIMSELF, BEFORE HIS GENIUS AS A GREAT PAINTER WAS RECOGNIZED!



RENNER DID NOT TELL THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF HIS OBTAINING THIS LANDSCAPE UNTIL MANY YEARS LATER. HE JUST LET THE JUDGES BELIEVE THAT THE PAINTING HAD BEEN PRESENTED TO HIM BY ARMAND LORET DURING THE LATTER'S LIFETIME. FOR HOW, INDEED, COULD HE EXPLAIN THIS BAFFLING MYSTERY OF A GHOST'S NIGHT VISIT?

THE END

MAD MATADOR'S

FIENDISH FRENZY

ALL HIS LIFE, IT WAS THE BURNING OBSESSION OF JUAN LORCA TO HEAR THE ROAR OF THE CROWD IN HIS EARS: "BRAVO, JUAN! BRAVO!" BUT NO ROAR OF PRAISE DID HE EVER HEAR. AND BECAUSE HE SUFFERED NEGLECT, HUMILIATION AND SCORN, JUAN'S SOUL BECAME A POISONED THING. AND OUT OF THIS VANITY AND THE POISON OF JUAN'S SOUL CAME THE SEEDS OF THE STRANGEST AND MOST TERRIBLE TRAGEDY IN THE LONG HISTORY OF SPAIN'S BLOODY BULLFIGHT ARENAS.

YOUR ANCESTORS WERE THE GREATEST MATADORS OF SPAIN, WERE THEY, JUAN LORCA?

SO! A MERE PICADOR WILL SOMEDAY PROVE THAT HE IS GREATER THAN THE FIRST TWO MATADORS OF SEVILLE, EH, JUAN?



LOOK AT HIM--A CLUMSY, BRAGGING COWARD, AFRAID EVEN OF THE STUFFED HEAD OF A BULL! A JACKAL WHO HAS LEFT HIS WIFE AND DAUGHTER, TO HIDE HIS SHAME!

POOR JUAN! HE'S ALWAYS WANTED TO BE A MATADOR LIKE HIS ANCESTORS!



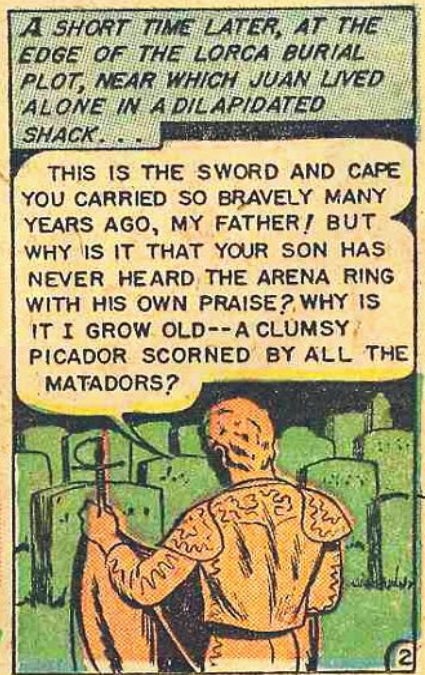
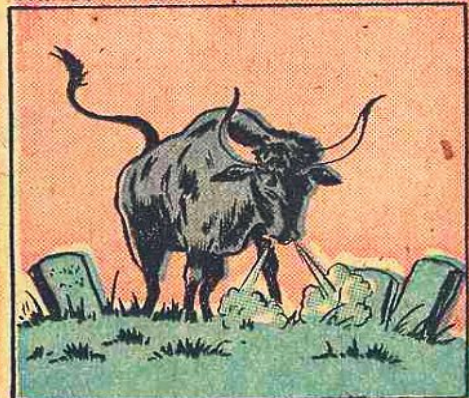
IT IS TRUE! SOMEDAY I WILL PROVE THAT I AM GREATER THAN ANY OF YOU IN THE ARENA!

HEE-HEE! JUAN LORCA IS A BITTER MAN--A MAN AFTER MY OWN HEART!





MARIA WAS FAR FROM A COWARDLY YOUNG LADY. YET, SHE WAS AFRAID! AND HER FEAR WAS OF THINGS SHE COULD NOT KNOW, NOR FORESEE, NOR JUDGE. MARIA DID NOT FEAR THE FIERCE BLACK BULL WHO ROAMED THE COUNTRYSIDE, WILD, BUT SHE FEARED SOMETHING STRANGE AND TERRIBLE WHICH WAS STILL ONLY A SHADOW OF THINGS TO COME!



YOU WERE BRAVE, MY FATHER, LIKE YOUR FATHER BEFORE YOU! BUT I AM A COWARD, A BRAGGART! AND BECAUSE I OFTEN HATE MYSELF FOR WHAT I AM, I HAVE EVEN ABANDONED MY WIFE AND BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTER, TO LIVE ALONE WITH MY HUMILIATION!



HEARING THE SUDDEN, SHARP SNORT, JUAN WHEELED TO FACE THE WILD BLACK BULL OF DEATH!

EL TORO MORTO! IT IS A SIGN! IT IS THE WILL OF MY ANCESTORS THAT THE BULL OF DEATH COMES HERE TONIGHT!

IT IS MY WILL, JUAN LORCA! IT IS ALSO MY WILL THAT YOU FIGHT EL TORO MORTO!



THE FEELING THAT CAME TO JUAN WAS STRANGE AND EXHILIRATING. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HIS LIFE, HE WAS NOT AFRAID OF ANYTHING!

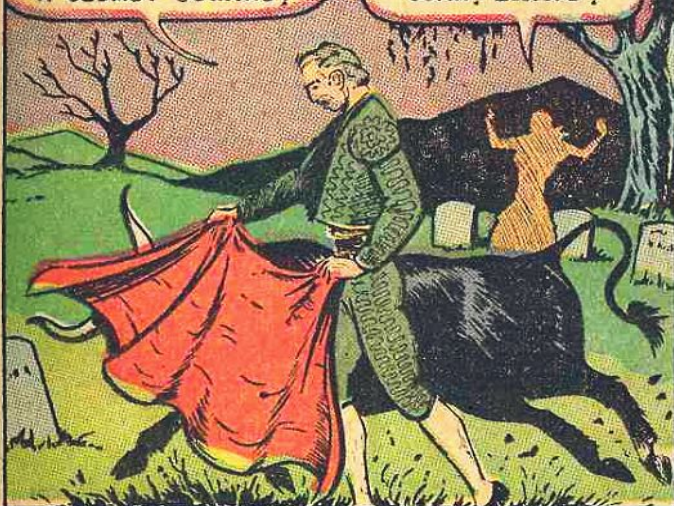
PLAY HIM WITH THE CAPE, JUAN! BRAVO, BRAVO!

I SHALL KILL EL TORO MORTO, AND THE WHOLE COUNTRYSIDE WILL SHOUT MY PRAISE!



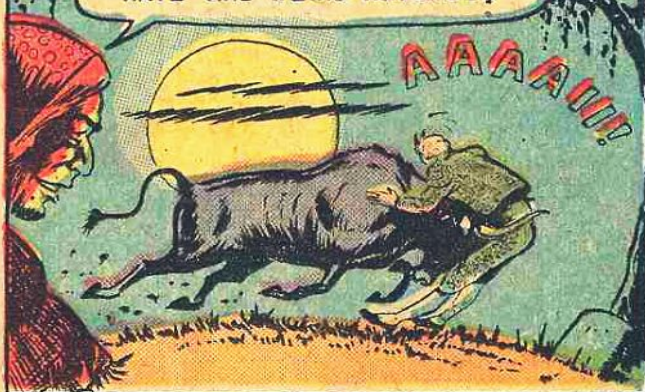
I SHALL BE ABLE TO LAUGH AT THE MATADORS WHO SAY THAT JUAN IS A CLUMSY COWARD!

PLAY THE BULL CLOSE TO YOUR BODY LIKE A GREAT MATADOR, JUAN! BRAVO!



BUT THE FINAL LIVING EFFORT OF JUAN LORCA TO PROVE HE WAS A MATADOR WAS IN VAIN! TO THE LAST, JUAN WAS NO MORE THAN A CLUMSY PICADOR!

THE BULL HAS KILLED THE PICADOR! AND NOW HIS SOUL IS MINE, FOR A BLACK FUTURE OF HATE AND WEIRD REVENGE!



WITH GREEDY HASTE, GRETA SUMMONED FORTH HER FLUNKIES OF EVIL TO PREPARE A GRAVE FOR JUAN. AND THEN, AT LAST, WHEN ALL WAS READY...

COME FORTH FROM THE FRESH DUG EARTH OF YOUR GRAVE INTO THE MIDNIGHT AIR, SPIRIT OF JUAN! HEAR THE VOICE OF GRETA! SPIRIT OF JUAN, FOLLOW THE VOICE OF GRETA TO YOUR VENGEANCE ON THE HATED MATADORS!



I HEAR AND OBEY YOUR VOICE, WITCH OF THE SEVILLIAN HILLS!

YOUR HOUR OF REVENGE OVER THE MATADORS HAS COME! YOUR DAYS OF SEETHING HUMILIATIONS ARE OVER, IF YOU OBEY THE VOICE OF GRETA!



I OBEY / ANYTHING, SO THAT I MAY NOT LIE IN THE CEMETERY OF MY ANCESTORS IN ETERNAL SHAME!

SPIRIT OF JUAN LORCA, YOU'LL RIDE EL TORO MORTO INTO THE ARENA OF SEVILLE / UNSEEN BY ANYONE, YOU WILL GUIDE THE FURY OF THIS BULL AND TEACH IT THE ART OF KILLING MATADORS!



THEN, I HAVE NOT DIED IN VAIN / IT IS A BOUNDLESS JOY TO KNOW THAT EVEN NOW-- AFTER DEATH-- I SHALL HAVE THE LAST WORD WITH THE MATADORS!



THE NEXT DAY, ALL OF SEVILLE WAS ASTONISHED TO LEARN THAT THE WILD BLACK BULL OF DEATH HAD WANDERED PEACEFULLY INTO ONE OF THE FEEDING PENS OF THE ARENA...

IT IS SOMETHING I CANNOT UNDERSTAND... IT IS AS IF EL TORO MORTO CAME HERE PURPOSELY TO FIGHT THE MATADORS!

BUT NOT THE BULL ALONE, GARCIA! HE COMES WITH THE INVISIBLE GUIDANCE OF JUAN, WHO HATES THE MATADORS OF SEVILLE!



IN THE FOLLOWING WEEKS, THE DEADLY FURY OF EL TORO MORTO TOOK A TRAGIC TOLL / FIRST, THE LIFE OF MANUEL, TORRERO PRIMERO...

HE IS THE ONE WHO ATTACKED ME WITH THE STUFFED HEAD OF A BULL, EL TORO!

HE CHARGES ME, NOT THE CAPE! I AM FINISHED! AIEEE!



THEN, PEDRO, WHO WAS TORRERO SEGUNDO AFTER MANUEL, FELL...

HE HAS HIT PEDRO / AS THE WITCH OF THE SEVILLIAN HILLS PREDICTED, I AM NOW TORRERO PRIMERO, SOONER THAN I EXPECTED!

GARCIA, YOUR TURN IS NEXT! NOW YOU MUST FIGHT THIS TERRIBLE ANIMAL / YOU MAY BE KILLED, TOO!



DO NOT WORRY, LITTLE ONE! IT IS WITHOUT BOASTING THAT I FEEL I SHALL KILL EL TORO MORTO, WHERE MY FRIENDS HAVE FAILED!

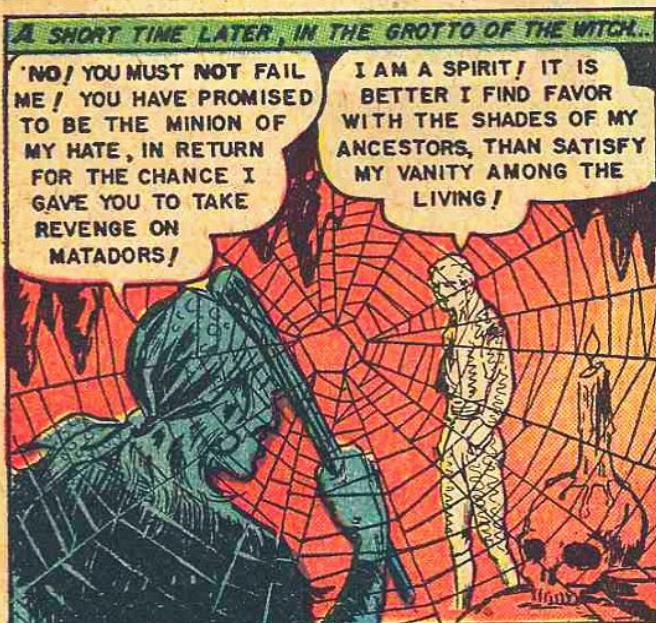
I SHALL CONSULT THE WITCH OF THE HILLS! IF SHE SAYS GARCIA MUST DIE IN THE FIGHT, IT IS BETTER THAT I SHOOT THIS BULL BEFORE HE ENTERS THE RING!



EACH NIGHT, AFTER A VICTORIOUS BOUT IN THE ARENA ASTRIDE HIS BULL OF DEATH, JUAN RETURNED TO HIS GRAVE IN THE LORCA BURIAL PLOT... AND THEN IT NO LONGER SEEMED TO HIM THAT HE WAS A CONTEMPTIBLE PICADOR IN A COMPANY OF SPLENDID TORREROS.

HEAR ME, MY ANCESTORS! NO LONGER AM I A MAN OF SHAME! NO LONGER DO THE MATADORS JEER THE NAME OF LORCA! I HAVE DONE WELL INDEED, AND HOPE TO FIND FAVOR IN YOUR EYES!







I AM HIS DAUGHTER, ALTHOUGH I HAVE NOT SEEN MY FATHER, EXCEPT IN THE RING, SINCE HE LEFT MY MOTHER AND ME!



NOW I KNOW HOW I SHALL BE AVENGED ON JUAN FOR BREAKING HIS BARGAIN WITH ME! HE SHALL NEVER REST IN PEACE IN THE HALLOWED GROUND OF HIS ANCESTORS!



MARIA, YOUR SWEETHEART WILL SURVIVE HIS FIGHT AGAINST EL TORO MORTO AND WILL ENTER THE RING MANY TIMES! BUT HE WILL ALWAYS BE KNOWN AFTER TOMORROW AS "GARCIA THE MELANCHOLY", FOR THE TRAGEDY OF HIS LIFE!

TH--THE TRAGEDY OF HIS LIFE?



I HAVE SPOKEN! GARCIA WILL LIVE! BUT MORE THAN THIS I SHALL NOT SAY, MARIA LORCA!



CACKLING WITH DEMONIC GLEE, THE WITCH OF SEVILLE MADE HER WAY SWIFTLY TO THE GRAVE OF JUAN...

OLD WITCH, LET ME REST IN PEACE! HAVE I NOT TOLD YOU THAT I WILL NOT GUIDE EL TORO MORTO TO THE DEATH OF ANOTHER MATADOR?

ONE FINAL RIDE, JUAN -- IT IS ALL I ASK -- AND I PROMISE YOU THAT EL TORO WILL NOT THIS TIME KILL A MATADOR!



WILL YOU RIDE JUST ONCE MORE, IF I MAKE THIS PROMISE?

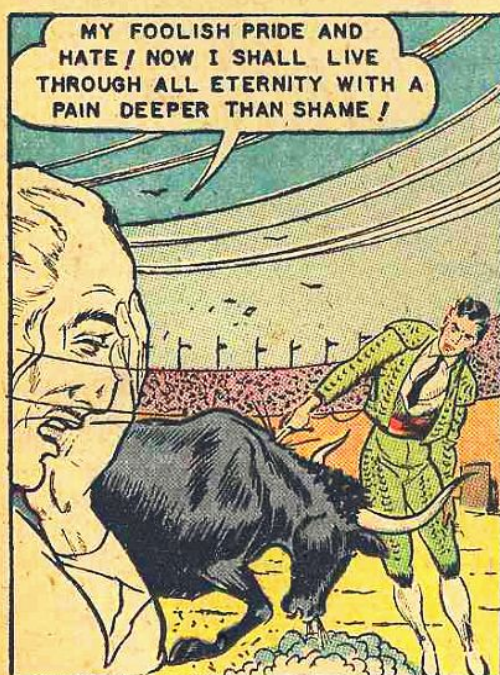
VERY WELL, WITCH! I AGREE UNDER THOSE TERMS, BUT THEN YOU MUST NEVER DISTURB MY REST AGAIN!



AND SO IT WAS THAT JUAN LORCA, FOOLISH AND VAIN EVEN AFTER DEATH, RODE EL TORO MORTO ONE LAST TIME, IN A BOUT THAT THE PEOPLE OF SEVILLE HAVE NEVER FORGOTTEN!

BRAVO, GARCIA! BRAVO!

HE FIGHTS WELL, BUT HE WILL SURELY BE KILLED!



GARCIA CORDOBA, AS GRETA THE WITCH PROPHESED, LIVED TO FIGHT MANY GREAT BULLS AFTER EL TORO MORTO. BUT NO MATTER HOW WILDLY THE CROWD CHEERED THE DARING AND SKILL OF ITS FAVORITE HERO, IT ALWAYS SEEMED THAT GARCIA WEL-COMED DEATH IN THE WAY HE FOUGHT...FOR HIS FACE WAS FOR-EVER SAD AND SUITED WELL HIS NEW NAME: "GARCIA THE MELANCHOLY", FIRST MATADOR OF SEVILLE-- AND FINALLY OF ALL SPAIN!

THE END

THE IMAGE OF DOOM

I am still dazed as I ponder the strange series of events that has led me to this fearsome accursed chamber. And yet, I should not mind, for soon my ceaseless torment, my dread anguish will depart and I shall experience eternal rest and everlasting peace.

I shall attempt to set down these occurrences which destroyed my happiness and blighted my life.

Until a short time ago, my wife and I were deliriously happy and content. Surely, there was no other couple on the face of the Earth as blissful as we. It seemed all our waking thoughts were concerned in some minor acts by which we might please one another. She would cater to my every little whim and I, in return, would seek some personal pleasure of mine which I could sacrifice for but a smile from her lips.

Oddly enough, one matter which I'd never brought to light, and of which she was totally unaware, was my intense dislike for all animals, pets in particular. No doubt, this prejudice of mine could be traced back to some unpleasant experience I'd had as a child, but which I'd never tried to analyze.

Upon arriving home, one late Summer's day, I discovered, to my annoyance, that my wife had procured a cat from somewhere and had decided to make a pet of the animal. I frowned upon the very thought, but made every attempt to conceal this fact from my wife. For, as I have already stated, she was completely unaware of my idiosyncrasy.

At any length, I resolved not to show my displeasure, for I realized my attitude to be narrow-minded. And above all, I desired to satisfy and indulge my wife. The cat (Satan was his name) proved to be an even-tempered beast and well-mannered and, considering these facts, I opined that it would not take long before I too should develop a fancy to him.

He was, I will admit, a beautiful animal—almost completely black with a sleek, shiny coat of fur and gleaming, green eyes. The only thing that kept it from being entirely black was an irregular circle of white on its left side and within the circle, three black dots were set in a triangular pattern. With some imagination, one might regard this odd design as a primitive drawing of a face, the three dots representing the eyes and nose.

As time passed, I found, in reverse of my expectations, Satan's presence annoying. If I should attempt to read some book or paper, he would leap

into my lap and nestle himself comfortably and indicate his desire to be caressed and petted. When laboring over some household chore, he'd consistently crawl between my legs or thrust himself upon me.

Unable to bear his attentions any longer, I began to shoo Satan away. I even kicked and abused him in an attempt to discourage his advances. For a while, this maltreatment proved fruitless, but later as he came to understand, I detected, in my wife, an attitude of annoyance. This displeasure in her, being the last thing I wanted to arouse, I decided to curb my violent temper.

Now, as I made friendly advances toward Satan, he avoided me. When I entered the room he occupied, he would either show his resentment or saunter out with what I regarded as an arrogant air. Without thought or reason, I resented Satan's very right to express his annoyance at my approach. And yet, considerate of my dear wife's emotions, I hesitated to act on my resentment at first.

Then came that dreadful night. The desire to take him up in my arms, to make friends with him, became overwhelming. Satan seemed to detect this, and very cleverly managed to disappear as I labored to seek him out. Our house was large and for so small an animal it was not difficult to discover several places in which to hide. Yet, I was determined. I was certain that once I held him close and bestowed my affections, he would most assuredly understand. But he was nowhere to be found.

Almost to the point of exasperation, I resolved on a means with which to locate him. I started in the basement, covering every nook and cranny. No corner was overlooked and at length, positive that he wasn't there, I ascended the stairway and bolted the door, insuring his inability to escape me while I searched above. For almost an hour I feverishly sought him out. Finally, completely worn and weary, I deduced that he was not in the house and I settled down in my favorite easy chair.

I had plunged the room into semi-darkness, as this seemed restful. I must have dozed off, for upon recovering my senses, I was unable to recall how long I'd been there. And as I sat, trying to recollect my thoughts, I became uneasy, seeming to sense another presence in the room. Slowly, I focused my glance from one place to another until, with a shudder, my eyes fell upon an eerie, horrible, penetrating sight.

Across the room, from beneath an end-table in a dark corner, I saw a hideous, miniature, grinning skull staring up at me. So shocked was I for the moment, that I remained petrified!

But as I stared, another object took form around this revolting sight. I blinked. Sure enough, lying there in the darkness was Satan. And the skull, that terrifying *Image Of Doom*, was nothing more than the indefinite splotch of white on Satan's left side, to which I have alluded earlier. The irregular circle of white fur had taken on a more definite outline and the three, small, black spots represented the hollow eyes and nose of the skull.

It took but a moment to recompose myself and recall the efforts in which I had indulged earlier. In a sudden movement, I was on my feet and had closed the door, securing the beast within the four walls of that room. Then, I turned in Satan's direction. Immediately, he was on his feet, his back hunched up in apparent fright. He hissed loudly as I approached and as I reached out a hand to pet him, he darted away.

I followed him from one side of the room to the other, until he suddenly found himself trapped in a corner. Once more, I reached out and suddenly withdrew my hand with a jolt of pain. The terrified beast had sunk his claws deep into my flesh. My entire frame throbbed violently for a moment. With a devilish fury, I grasped the monster by the neck and lifted him from the floor. Turning, I bounded through the door and down the basement steps. Apparently aware of its impending fate, the beast struggled furiously to break my grip.

I darted across the basement room, hurled open the furnace door and thrust Satan within the metal confines, where hungry flames licked ravenously. The piercing shrieks which lasted for but a moment, chilled me to the very marrow.

On the day following the deed, which I managed to keep secret from my wife, several neighbors informed me of a strange phenomenon, emanating from the chimney of my house. I stepped out to view it and it seemed, upon first sight, that my pounding heart would burst! There, formed in the smoke issuing forth from the chimney, was the shape of a skull!

Try as I might, I could not dismiss the sight from my mind. It was shortly after that I detected in my wife, more than a suspicion on her part of the role I had played in disposing of Satan. Tormented beyond endurance over the guilt I held buried in my breast, I sought some means to atone. This manifested itself in my personally procuring another cat, so similar in appearance to Satan that one would hardly have been able to tell them apart. This new

pet, whom I also named Satan, surprisingly enough bore the exact same markings on its left side as the first cat . . . an indefinite splotch of white fur with three black spots set at a triangle. Were I superstitious enough to believe in reincarnation, I should not have doubted it to be the same cat.

For a short while, happiness reigned supreme in our home. But, in time, the exact opposite of my anticipations were realized. The presence of this new pet would only bring to mind my heinous crime against the former. But this was not all. As before, the irregular pattern on Satan's left side gradually began to take on a definite shape. Day by day, I noticed the change. The design was slowly transforming itself into the *Image Of Doom*! Consistently, I attempted to avoid the animal, but the more I repulsed him, the more he would bestow his loathsome caresses upon me. At night, I would suddenly awaken with a start to find the beast seated on my chest, its red tongue licking at my face.

At last, unable to bear up under the strain any longer, I seized him and prepared to make for the furnace in the basement once more. But this time, my wife was alert and attempted to arrest my actions. In a rage, I struck her, and in falling her head must have struck a molding, for I detected not the slightest movement in her. Upon investigation, I discovered she was dead.

What demoniacal thoughts possessed me, I do not know! But upon regaining my senses later, I realized that I had thrown both my wife and the cat into the roaring inferno!

It was but a few days later that some policemen visited the premises. Without my knowledge, several of the neighbors had contacted them, informing them of my wife's disappearance. Despite my fabrication that she had gone out of town to visit, they persisted in examining the house. I accompanied them in their search and when, at length, they descended to the basement, my breath grew more rapid.

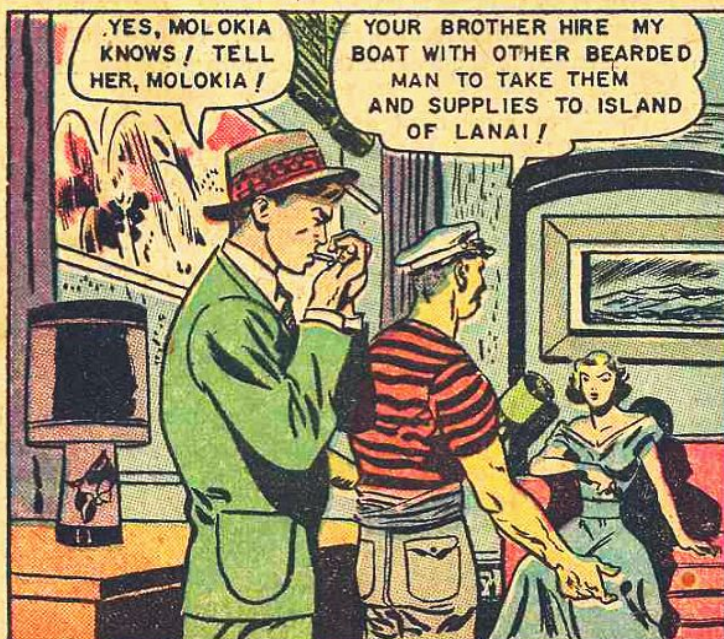
They were most quiet during the search, but as they prepared to depart, one of them accidentally kicked the coal shovel. It fell against the furnace with a loud clang and then, suddenly, there arose the most fearful wail—a hollow moaning, enough to turn one's blood to ice! They turned. One of them flung open the furnace door and out bounded Satan, very much *alive*! The pile of charred bones, mixed with the ashes were soon analyzed.

But now my brain is pounding mercilessly and I can recount no more. There are footsteps coming down the corridor—coming for me. My torment will soon be ended!

THE END

VICTIMS

FOR THE CRAWLING MENACE



HOURS LATER, AS MOLOKIA'S YAWL HEADED FOR THE ISLAND OF LANAI...

Y'KNOW, MISS FARROW, WHEN YOU CAME INTO MY OFFICE IN HONOLULU TO HIRE ME TO FIND YOUR BROTHER, YOU DIDN'T TELL ME ALL THE FACTS!

YES, MR. COLBY, YOU SHOULD KNOW EVERYTHING! THERE'S NOTHING TO HIDE!



I CAME FROM THE STATES TO FIND JOHN! HE AND PROFESSOR DARNAD WERE EXPERIMENTING WITH PRIMITIVE ONE-CELLED ANIMALS AND PROTOPLASMIC LIFE! THEY FELT THEY COULD DO THEIR RESEARCH WORK UNDISTURBED ON SOME ISLAND IN HAWAII! BUT JOHN NEVER WROTE ME. NATURALLY, I BECAME WORRIED!



LANAI AHEAD!

OH, I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE JOHN!

WE'LL TAKE THE SMALL BOAT TO SHORE!



THE YAWL WAS ANCHORED. PETE AND DEBORAH HEADED BEACHWARD IN THE YAWL'S DINGHY...

MOLOKIA SAID THOSE HUTS ARE THE LABS... BUT I DON'T SEE A SOUL!



I'LL SEE IF JOHN IS THERE! JOHN!

MISS FARROW... WAIT!



AIEEEE!

WHAT IS IT?



IT'S JOHN! LOOK... HIS SIGNET RING ON THE FINGER! OHHH! (SOB)

GOOD GRIEF!





"BUT IT WAS TOO LATE! IT HAD DEVELOPED LIFE AND SELF-MOTIVATION..."

HELP ME, DARNAD! HELP!



HORRIBLE! IT CONSUMED JOHN'S FLESH!

AND... AND... WHEN IT WAS THROUGH, IT SPILLED JOHN'S BONES THERE... OVER THE TABLE / I MUST KEEP IT ALIVE! JOHN IS PART OF IT!

HE'S INSANE-- MAD FROM WHAT HE SAW!



SOON THE NATIVES WILL COME WITH WILD PIGS... THEN I WILL FEED IT! HEE / HEE! IT IS ALWAYS HUNGRY... FOR FLESH!

STAY HERE, DEBORAH! I WANT TO FOLLOW DARNAD AND SEE IF THERE IS ANY TRUTH IN HIS WEIRD STORY!



HEAVEN HELP US! THE OLD GUY WAS TELLING THE TRUTH! THAT MUST BE... IT!



IT FOLLOWS THE PROFESSOR AROUND AS IF IT UNDERSTANDS EVERY WORD HE'S SAYING!

HEE / HEE! STAY IN THE SHACK UNTIL THE NATIVES BRING THE WILD PIGS! THEY MUST NOT SEE YOU! HEE! HEE!



IT HAS TURNED AROUND -- AS IF IT SENSES MY PRESENCE!





A HORRIBLE NAUSEA SWEEPED OVER PETE, AS THE PROTOPLASMIC MASS WAS ABOUT TO ENVELOP HIS BODY... IN DESPERATION, PETE FUMBLING FOR THE MATCHES IN HIS POCKET...



THE MATCHBOOK FLAMED UP AND PETE HURLED IT INTO THE MASS OF HORROR THAT WANTED TO CONSUME HIS BODY!

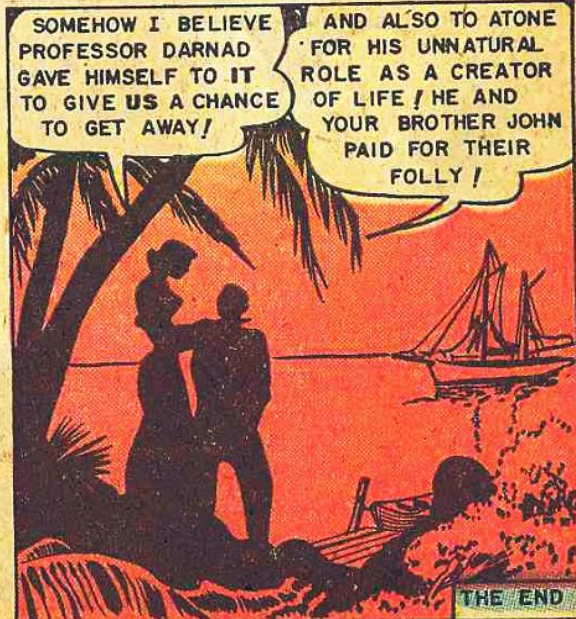


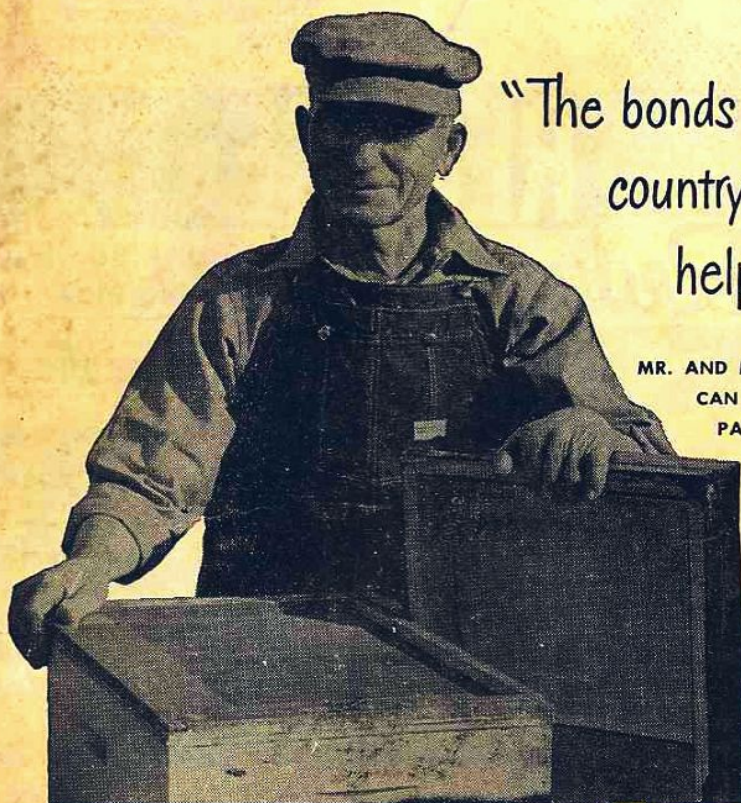
JUST THEN, THE NATIVES WITH TRAPPED WILD PIGS ENTERED THE CLEARING... AND AS IF IN PAIN AND RAGE, IT HEADED FOR THE TERRIFIED NATIVES...



NOW PETE REALIZED WHY PROFESSOR DARNAD'S MIND SNAPPED! FOR AS HE WATCHED IN HORROR AS IT CONSUMED THE NATIVE'S FLESH, PETE FELT HIS OWN MIND REELING WITH TERROR!



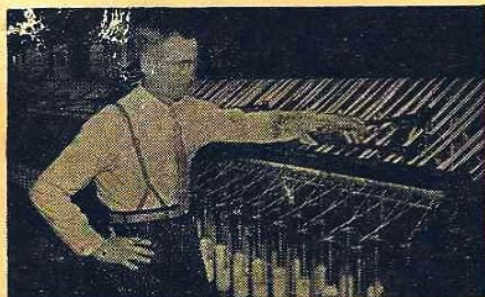




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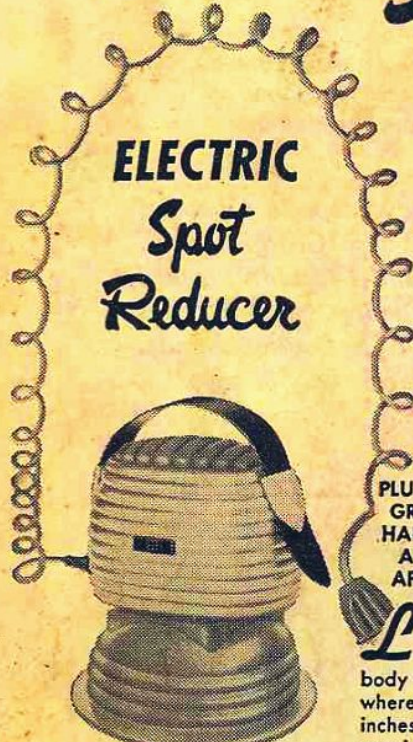
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